

***Amendments to the Claims:***

Please amend the claims as set forth below.

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~M~~ method for protecting a file with proprietary content against unauthorized copying in response to inquiries by file sharing by other people's computers which are pooled to form an internet file sharing site and which make the file to be protected available in ~~the form of~~ randomly stored data records, each of which includes part of the proprietary content and metadata which ~~inter alia consist of~~ includes at least one hash ID ~~and e.g. the title, characterised by~~ comprising the following steps:
  - searching for the ~~content~~ file to be protected on the internet
  - saving at least the hash ID of each data record provided as a hit by at least one other person's computer
  - generating a data record which is modified from the data record provided and which includes at least the saved hash ID and replacement content data linked to the ~~latter saved~~ hash ID
  - answering the inquiries from other people's computers about the file to be protected, by providing the modified data record.
2. (Currently Amended) The ~~M~~ method according to claim 1, ~~characterized by the following partial steps wherein said searching step further comprises:~~
  - entering at least one search term identifying the file to be protected, in a local database of one's own computer
  - determining, entering and saving IP addresses of at least ~~some~~ one of the other people's computers in the local database of one's own computer
  - setting up a connection of one's own computer to the internet and starting the search by scanning for the search term on the other people's computers.

3. (Currently Amended) The M method according to claim 2, characterized in that one's own computer provides the modified data record belonging to the file to be protected, for downloading by the other people's computers designated by the saved IP addresses.
4. (Currently Amended) The M method according to claim 1, characterized in that the hash ID of each data record provided by ~~another~~ said other person's computer as a hit is compared with the saved hash IDs, and hits for which ~~the~~ a result of the comparison is positive are not further processed into a modified data record.
5. (Currently Amended) The M method according to claim 1, characterized in that ~~the~~ an IP address of one's own computer is ~~regularly~~ altered.
6. (Currently Amended) The M method according to claim 1, characterized in that inquiries by other people's computers about the file to be protected are logged in anonymous form.
7. (Currently Amended) The M method according to claim 1, characterized in that searching for the ~~content~~ file to be protected is done only up to a predetermined expiry date.
8. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said hash ID with modified content is not recognized by an inquiring, other person's computer as having modified content without an inspection of the actual content.
9. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein an inquiring, other person's computer, if said modified content with said hash ID is detected, searches for downloading said hash ID at least one additional time without human user intervention.

10. (New) The method of claim 2 further comprising providing said modified data record for downloading for said other people's computers designated by said saved IP address.
11. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said other person's computers are at least one computer subscribing to a distributed file sharing network.
12. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein said alteration is repeated regularly.
13. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said generating step further comprises replacing the data record provided with said modified data record.
14. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said generating step further comprises rerouting the inquiries from other people's computers to said hash ID linked to said modified data record.
15. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said generating step further comprises both replacing the data record provided with said modified data record and rerouting the inquiries by other people's computers to said hash ID linked to said modified data record.